

Watchman & Journal.

TERMS—\$2.00 per year, in advance; or \$2.50 if not paid within three months.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1883.

The Troy and Boston railway has paid its tax, amounting to \$405. The fatalities which seem to have attended the effort of the commissioner to communicate with the officials of this road, from the dispatching of the return blanks in early summer to his final letter in the fall to the president of the company, which that official says he has never seen, is a veritable comedy of errors. The first notice the officials had that the state had a claim which it was trying to enforce was a mention of the fact in a Bennington paper that Commissioner Dillingham had sued the company. In half a dozen communications on the subject the long-suffering commissioner exhausted his store of patience and politeness, and still the company had from a country newspaper its first inkling that the state was getting anxious about a little matter of a few hundred dollars in taxes. There is apparently a sore loose either in the postal communication between Waterbury and Troy, or in the internal management of the office of the railway company.

"To these republican patrons of ours we have a duty to perform, and one of the chief duties is to keep them informed about the aspirants for office in their own party. The chiefs of the ring which 'runs' the republican party in this state have constituted themselves into a close corporation, so far as this, that no matter what private dissensions they may have among themselves, no organ of the party shall ever be allowed to allude to them." This from an article from the *Argus and Patriot* of December 12, reprinted in this issue of THE WATCHMAN. Now let this democratic guardian of Vermont republicans perform its full duty, not only to them but to the people at large, and tell them plainly who are "the chiefs of the ring which 'runs' the republican party in this state," and who are the rank and file. This call is made in no capricious spirit. The things the *Argus and Patriot* alleges democrats and republicans alike have a right to know, and are especially anxious to know. Let our dauntless contemporary speak out, give the names of the "chiefs," their followers, their purposes, and all it knows about them. The people demand it. Forewarned, forearmed, in the interest of "government of the people, by the people, for the people," we will close hold together to dissolve this "close corporation."

Preparing for 1884.

At the meeting of the national republican committee in Washington, a week ago, Chicago was selected as the place, and June 31 the day, for holding the next convention for the nomination of candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. Senator Sabin of Minnesota, Mr. Windom's successor, was chosen chairman. Senator Frye of Maine presented a plan for a new basis of representation which would secure to the states which must be depended on to elect a republican president a preponderance of votes in the nominating convention. Under the present system each state has four delegates-at-large and two for each congressional district. Each territory also has two delegates. Mr. Frye's proposed plan was as follows: Each state shall be entitled to four delegates, as now; each district to one instead of two, as now; to one additional delegate for each ten thousand votes cast within its limits in 1880 for the republican candidates for presidential electors, and to one additional delegate for a majority fraction of ten thousand votes. Each territory was also allowed two delegates. The vote for presidential electors is taken as best indicating the real strength of the party in any district, being less liable to be affected by local causes. The effect of this change would have been to have increased the representation of the northern states by one hundred and nine delegates and to have decreased the southern delegations in the aggregate sixty-one members. Illinois would have had an increase of twelve, Indiana eleven, New York sixteen, Ohio seventeen, and Pennsylvania sixteen delegates. Vermont would have had an increase of four delegates, while Rhode Island would have lost two, the only one of the northern states thus affected. The delegations of five of the southern states would not have been changed, while the others would have been reduced in numbers varying from three in Virginia and Tennessee to eleven in Texas. Under the existing basis the total number of delegates in the convention will be eight hundred and twenty. Under the proposed basis the total would have been eight hundred and seventy. This plan was not adopted but was conveniently referred, after a warm debate, to the convention for discussion and settlement. It was perhaps unfortunate for Mr. Frye, if he wished to have his plan succeed, that he hailed from a state which has twice presented a "favorite son" for conventional honors and who is popularly credited with aspirations for a "third term." It may have been merely a coincidence, but it is noticed that the new plan would have given to the states in which Mr. Blaine has had his largest and most enthusiastic following the bulk of the increased representation. So that, justly or unjustly, the plan was handicapped with a suspicion that it was a scheme to advance the ambition of Mr. Blaine. It is true that the southern states in the last election were not able to contribute any electoral votes to the republican cause, and that they probably will not be able to in the next. The re-

publicans have succeeded under the existing plan, and it does not appear that the influence of the southern delegates has been exerted to accomplish the nomination of an objectionable or an undesirable candidate. In the long run the existing plan may prove to be the safest and best. It has certainly worked well in every instance thus far, and when there are any reasonable apprehensions that it will not continue to work well, it will be time to think seriously of making a change. Under certain conditions of public sentiment—like the transition, for instance, which was taking place between 1856 and 1860—Mr. Frye's plan might secure the choice of a very unrepresentative, or inadequately representative, body. At all events, there seems to be no really good reason at this time for tinkering the bridge over which the party has safely passed for nearly a quarter of a century.

A Six Million Dollar Fraud.

Eight years ago the *New York Tribune* exposed the frauds of the canal ring in New York through which the people had been robbed of enormous sums of money. A few years before the *Times* unearthed the notorious frauds of the Tweed ring. During the past week the *Tribune* has published new and startling disclosures of corruption and extravagance in the city government, which have taken from the city treasury since 1876 the appalling sum of nearly six million dollars. The method employed by this new gang of thieves is thus described by the *Tribune*: "The estimates prepared by the department, on which contracts are made, are wholly misleading. Contractors in some way procure information which shows just how far these estimates are erroneous, and are thus enabled to secure contracts which result in enormous losses to the city through the vacation and reduction of assessments. The method is absolutely simple. A street opening or a sewer, for example, will require excavation—so much in rock, so much in earth. The engineer states approximately the amount of each, and bids are invited. The outside contractor makes a straightforward bid, allowing him a fair profit on each. The inside contractor makes a bid considerably higher on one, and very much lower on the other—resulting in a lower average. He thus gets the contract. Then it mysteriously turns out that, of the work on which he has made a very low bid, there is far less than the engineer estimated; of that on which he made an unreasonably high bid, far more. The engineer's deceptive estimate and the contractor's secret knowledge of the real facts work together; and the unbalanced bid becomes as thorough a piece of burglary as if the city treasury had been pried open by a jimmy." Under some of the contracts it shows that fifty dollars a cubic yard has been paid for excavating rock for which a fair compensation was less than two dollars. A long list of similar frauds is given which were rendered possible only by the collusion or gross incompetency of the city officials. These frauds are not found in a single case, but appear in contracts week after week and year after year, till they reach in the aggregate the enormous sum mentioned above. It is not reassuring to think that under the existing electoral system, the election of a president for thirty-eight states and eight territories, aggregating nearly sixty millions of people, will turn upon the vote of a city in which such frauds are possible and which for decades has been a synonym for all that is corrupt in politics and iniquitous in government.

Notes and Comments.

PHILADELPHIA PRESS: "A week ago the democrats won their victory in the democratic party; but now that they have got it they are in doubt, not so much what to do with their victory, as what their victory will do with them. The faction of action having won the right to act, the entire party rises up to beg it to do nothing. The party caucus having had the courage of its convictions, the speaker it elected is implored to have the cowardice of his prudence. East, West, North and South, panic seizes the place of principle, and the party which dared everything to elect a free-trader speaker is urged to do nothing, so as to retain the possibility of electing anybody president." At an election for delegates to the democratic state convention, held in New Orleans on Friday, a terrible tragedy was enacted. In the midst of a little contest over a challenged vote some one fired a shot. This seemed to be a signal, as firing immediately became general. Great excitement prevailed, and the police were powerless against the combatants. Captain Michael J. Fortier, a prominent democrat, was mortally wounded and expired in a few minutes. Gus Renaud, superintendent of streets in the seventh ward, was picked up unconscious and died in a little while. Edward Masson, deputy constable, received three balls in his leg, severing an artery. He survived but a little while. Eleven others were wounded more or less seriously. Forty or fifty shots were fired. There was a large crowd about the polls at the time.

B. B. SMALLEY is talked of as the next democratic candidate for governor of this state. Of Mr. Smalley the Rutland *Herold* says: "The republican is not near as old as the democratic party and nothing near so rotten. The democratic party in Boston, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore has always been and is today the party of municipal robbery and fraud. The Vermont democracy have no chance to steal anything in Vermont, and there is nothing worth stealing if they had a chance. Mr. Smalley is a gentleman of decided ability and is very popular with men of all parties as a man of

integrity and public spirit. During the war Mr. Smalley, like his eminent father, the late Judge Smalley, was a staunch war democrat, and Vermont republicans have no serious differences with the patriots of any party. It is the 'copperhead' of 1861-5 that we never forgive."

"CONGRESSMAN BOUTELLE of Maine," writes the Washington correspondent of the *Boston Journal*, "caused two things to be done in the house which shows, at least, that his republicanism has no uncertain sound. The other day when the resolution of Hewitt, the leader of the democracy, calling upon the president to interfere in the case of O'Donnell was submitted to the house, Boutelle immediately drew a very apt paraphrase of it, adapted to the Danville massacre. Boutelle thought that if the United States house of representatives on the first day of its meeting, before it was fully organized, could request the president of the United States to inquire whether an Irish assassin was an American citizen, and whether, having been condemned to death for murder, he had been tried in accordance with the municipal laws of Great Britain, it would not be very extraordinary justice if the same American house of representatives should ask the question whether the victims of the Danville massacre were citizens of the United States, and whether any municipal law of Virginia had been violated by their taking off. Accordingly, Boutelle drafted the following resolution, which he asked Mr. Horr of Michigan, an older member, to present: 'Resolved, That the house bring to the notice of the president the case of the recent murder of several persons, claimed to have been citizens of the United States, at Danville, in the state of Virginia, in the hope that the president may ascertain whether said persons so murdered and injured were citizens of the United States, and if so, whether the killing and injuring of said citizens, if they were such, were in contravention of the provisions of the municipal law of the state of Virginia or of any law of the United States.' The reading of this resolution raised a tempest on the democratic side and twenty members sprang to their feet at once to object. Morrison's objection was heard and entertained, although Cabel of Virginia, who represents the Danville district, was vociferously demanding a hearing. Cabel tried to say that he would not object to the resolution, but the chair put him down as being out of order, and the resolution of course fell."

Mr. Morrill on the Coinage.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF COINAGE. A temporary suspension of the coinage of silver is not a new thing. It has been in the past, and it will be in the future, for several years to wholly exhaust the extensive stock now in the overloaded vaults of the treasury; and all those whose opinions are now being expressed in regard to its suspension will be the only effective policy to checkmate the anti-silver fanaticism supposed to prevail among some foreign nations. It would be stupid to suppose that these nations are exerting our utmost power to sustain it, not here but there, by rolling out of their path the chief obstacle which blocks their way, but which like the rock Sisyphus, always rolls back to crush ourselves. A temporary suspension is also indispensable to enable us to reform and to vastly improve our annual display of coinage, which in 1882 was equal in amount to that of the combined annual coinage of all other leading commercial nations. The purpose of the proposition to cease issuing one and two-dollar United States notes is to bring into circulation a large amount of silver dollars. The money system of the United States is a singular state of affairs. It is, as I am informed, soon to be greatly improved—fully demonstrated that small bills are no longer needed for the purpose of making change, and are pushed aside to make room for silver dollars.

EXCESS OF SILVER. There are in circulation at the present time \$93,353,787 of our silver coinage. There are now in the treasury \$14,337,533 of silver. When it is gone? *Cui bono?* The treasury is thoroughly gorged, and the stomachs of the people are suffering from hopeless indigestion. It can hardly be doubted that the two or more millions of dollars of silver now in the treasury will ever be used. The government has been and is being pushed aside to make room for silver dollars. Half as much of fractional silver and about three times as many silver dollars are now in the treasury than the usage of the people. When it is gone? *Cui bono?* The treasury is thoroughly gorged, and the stomachs of the people are suffering from hopeless indigestion. It can hardly be doubted that the two or more millions of dollars of silver now in the treasury will ever be used. The government has been and is being pushed aside to make room for silver dollars. 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